

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 08631 396 0

No 7549a. 133



7549a-133

ADDRESS

TO THE MOTHERS

IN

MOUNT VERNON CHURCH, BOSTON,

BY THEIR PASTOR,

EDWARD N. KIRK.

9

ADDRESS

TO THE MOTHERS

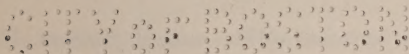
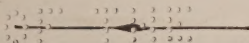
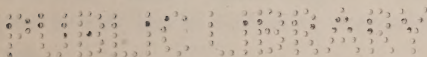
IN

7549a.133

MOUNT VERNON CHURCH, BOSTON,

BY THEIR PASTOR,

EDWARD N. KIRK.



ADDRESS

TO THE EDITOR

MOUNT VERNON CHURCH, BOSTON,

From 5498.11

94107

May 31, 1869.

RECEIVED

—

DECEMBER 1869

BOSTON

THREE OF E. MARVIN & COMPANY STREET

1869

ADDRESS.

SISTERS IN CHRIST,

I am permitted to counsel and encourage you, by virtue of my office. And my feelings also prompt me to come in this way within the hallowed circles of your homes, to encourage and aid you in the responsible work which the maternal relation imposes on you. Others may instruct you to preserve the health, and promote the intellectual and physical growth of your children. But it devolves on the Pastor to remind you of your highest responsibilities as connected with your children's immortal welfare.

The first duty of a parent is the consecration of the child to God. And I would suggest a form, not to be adopted by you, but as containing suggestions which may aid you.

CONSECRATION OF A CHILD TO THE LORD, BY ITS MOTHER.

“My heavenly Father,—This immortal being belongs to thee. I recognize and acknowledge thy right in it, as supreme. It will be under obligations to love and obey me; but its obligations to thee are first, and most important. I now gratefully receive it from thee as a treasure most precious to me, but inconceivably more precious to thee. I rejoice that it belongs to thee by a

higher title than to me ; that thou lovest it more than I do ; that thou hast created and redeemed it for high and holy ends. And now I take it from thy hands ; and in humble reliance on thy promised aid, I here engage, through Jesus Christ, thy dear Son, to train it in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord ;" to renounce for it all selfish and worldly ends ; and to fit it to be an instrument of building up thy kingdom, and of advancing thy glory in the world. Amen."

The whole duty of a mother is now, in fact, the performance of that vow. And to facilitate that work, I would suggest some directions.

1. *Begin with yourself.* Perhaps there is no work in life so momentous as this, for which so few that enter upon it have made any adequate and wisely-directed preparation. Yet it is not rational in us to undertake any great work without a suitable preparation of ourselves. I would arrange the qualities for the maternal office in two classes—self-control and good sense. A sober, enlightened judgment, is a rudder in the domestic ship. If the mother is hasty, let her learn to be calm and reflective ; never acting but from good reasons. If she is weak in any point of character, all her sentries should be set to watch at that post. She must learn to estimate things by their real worth ; to give the body and soul each their appropriate place ; to give time and eternity their due relative regard ; to balance between the favor of men and that of God ; to estimate the mental faculties aright and proportionally. Each child's peculiar disposition should be rightly estimated. Quickness of sympathy must not be allowed to magnify children's troubles. There is, in fact, no one quality that contributes more to the comfort and order of a family, and to the

right discharge of parental duty, than a sound judgment, or good sense, in the mother. And it is just as much to be sought after as any other mental quality. And with this is to be joined self-control, on Christian principles. The instinctive love of children must be controlled. Eli was a good man, but he lacked firmness; loving his children with too much fondness. He probably regarded it as pure love; yet it was mainly selfishness. Animals may safely follow a blind love, for it was given to guide them infallibly. But man must employ his higher faculties to regulate his instincts. A child is a wonderful being, because he is made in the image of God. Every day invests him with some new charm. And when he begins to love, the parent is tempted to win his love by indulgence and indirect flattery. The remedy for this is, to see the child constantly in its relations to Christ. Then it is important that the parent's conscience be duly regulated. If it is morbid, it produces gloom where cheerfulness should prevail. If it adopts the standard of the world, then the world reigns within Christ's kingdom. Perfection must be required, but imperfection borne with. Imperfection must be tolerated, and yet in such a way as not to sanction it. Firmness must not fall into tyranny, nor affection into indulgence. Vigilance over children, and confidence in them, must accompany each other. Familiarity must temper authority, and superiority must learn condescension. Confidence in its own powers must be inspired, along with the profoundest humility. Children must know that they are loved because they are children, and yet must be put upon their good behavior to win love. This requires much self-control in parents. But perhaps the most difficult element in a parent's heart to control, amid a thousand vexations, cares, disappointments and trials, is Impatience. The child must live in an atmosphere of gentle love that never changes its spirit,

but may change its manifestations, and be as lovely in its anger, its reproofs and chastisements, as in its caresses, if not as agreeable to the child. Impatience in a parent is a corner-stone loosened in the foundation of the family government. The mother who hopes for her child in God, is calm and serene; the mother who hopes for herself in her child, must sometimes become very impatient.

2. Another rule is, *Begin early*; early with your prayers, early with your example. Aim, from the birth, to throw around the child a truly heavenly atmosphere, whose sunbeams are the love and truth of God, whose essence is the authority of God. Begin early to educate the heart; because feelings, appetites and passions, are organizing themselves long before the intellect is developed. Begin early to imitate the Divine government in requiring unqualified submission to an affectionate and reasonable administration. Begin to subdue self-will as soon as it shows itself in the eye, the finger, the neck, the lip, or the voice. Begin early to awaken and cultivate the conscience. Deceit is one of the first bitter fruits of our apostasy. Check it as soon as it appears. Carry your process through, until the soul of the child dreads lying and deceit more than death. Make the conscience tender in regard to family sins, such as the disrespectful address to parents, and unkind words to each other. Instill right principle as the basis of right action, from the first dawning of moral life.

3. *Be conscientious*, in recognizing the child as belonging to Christ. He says to you, as Pharaoh's daughter said to the mother of Moses, "Take this child, and nurse it for me; and I will give thee wages." Trust him for your reward, and be faithful. If a king should intrust a child to your care, would you let it think it had no higher earthly destiny than to pick up straws in your house to

decorate its person? Yet that is just what every worldly-minded parent does. Conscientiously prepare your child for the service, the palace, the presence of the King eternal. Keep your last solemn account frequently in view. Conscientiously regard the claims of society, and often inquire, "What kind of a member of society am I training?"

4. *Be systematic.* You cannot control all your time; but control as much as you can; persevering in the endeavor, whatever difficulties you may encounter. The example of system in parents is invaluable to their children.

5. *Be constant and uniform;* because it needs all you can do, with the utmost diligence, to form a character in eight or ten years; and the main work is completed within that period. And then, there are constantly evil influences at work, within and without. Vanity, lying, revenge, pride, pilfering, selfishness, vulgarity, slander, are constantly coming under the observation of your children, in the old and the young whom they meet. You have to contend with a legion, whose warfare never ceases, never relaxes.

6. *Educate by your example.* This is requisite for ensuring filial respect. It is by example you are to show what religion is, and how lovely it is. The objects of religion are invisible. Children will readily discover whether their parents are controlled by the things that are seen, or by those that are unseen. Children must be taught to mount up to heaven, just as young birds are taught to fly. The mother flies, and shows them how to do it. Doctrines and precepts are excellent. God says you must teach them diligently. But it helps much, if you take a child by the hand, and say, "Come, my child, let us go to heaven; this is the way." Teach it how to love God, by showing that you have toward him the feel-

ings it has toward you. He feeds and clothes you. He saves you from falling. He comforts you when you cry. When the child sees this affecting you just as your kindness affects him, he begins to hear in nature's language, which is his "own tongue, the wonderful things of God." Teach your children confidence in God, by showing that you recognize his protecting care. Convince them you are not as kind as God. Teach them gratitude, benevolence, obedience, prayer, praise, patience, by practicing them.

7. *Be prayerful.* Always recognize your child as within the covenant, and plead for it in that light. Pray much for it, and often with it. Prayer is your strength; prayer binds the God of promise.

8. *Be encouraged.* "Be not weary in well-doing; for in due season you shall reap, if you faint not." "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." "Hope thou in God."

9. *Enter the Maternal Association.* As Paul says concerning some parts of his counsel, "This I say not by commandment." All the other points of duty I have here commended to you, are of divine authority; and no one has a right to determine whether they will conform to them, or not. But I now recommend a means of usefulness, which, as a Pastor, I highly prize, but with which I can bind no conscience. It is an invention of man, to secure a great end.

Mothers need information as much as merchants, or statesmen, about their specific duties. And two are better than one. These Institutions, rightly conducted, communicate to every member much valuable instruction. They are a medium, too, of sympathy in the cares, trials and solitudes of your station. But above all, I prize them for the prayer which they secure. To plead God's

promises for their children's salvation, is one great object of these Associations.

I would say much more to you, were I not hoping still to address you through the ordinary channels of the ministry. And I now commend you and your households to God, and to the word of his grace. Every high and solemn motive combines with the most tender and affecting considerations, to induce you to concentrate your energies—your being—upon this one great work. Do this well, and the Lord will commend you in that high assembly, where deeds of military heroism shall not be named, and literary achievements which filled the world with admiration shall command no attention. Your reward for fidelity shall be in the moral beauty, the holy intelligence, the heavenly wisdom characterizing your sons and your daughters. Your reward will come when you see your beloved children honoring God and blessing the world. And now the cry of a perishing world comes up in the ear of the Church—"Send forth your sons and your daughters to lead us in the way to heaven." Salvation must proceed from Zion. Our King, from his throne, is calling for men. The war has begun; the hosts are mustering; the time is shortening; the destinies of the world are soon to be determined! Mothers, redeemed by the Sacrifice which the Son of God made for you, repay him as Mary did, with the best you have—the most precious and beautiful of all your treasures.

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
MATERNAL ASSOCIATION OF MT. VERNON CHURCH.

ARTICLE I.

The Association shall be composed of Mothers in the church and congregation, who may sign this Constitution.

ARTICLE II.

The design of the Association is to secure to its members their mutual sympathy, aid and prayers, in reference to their maternal responsibilities.

ARTICLE III.

The regular season of meeting shall be the last Wednesday of every month. From April to October, at 4 o'clock, P. M. ; and in the other months, at half past 3, P. M.

ARTICLE IV.

The exercises of the meeting shall be,—reading the Scriptures and prayer, conversation upon a topic assigned at the previous meeting, and reading from appropriate works. The last Wednesday in December, the Association will meet in the morning and afternoon, and the time be entirely occupied in reading the Scriptures, and prayer.

ARTICLE V.

At the semi-annual meetings in January and June, the members will be expected to bring their children, under fifteen years of age, when the Pastor will be invited to be present and address them. At the meetings also in March and September,

the mothers will bring their children. For these meetings a topic shall be selected previously, upon which the children shall be requested to bring texts of Scripture, and be prepared to answer questions. At each of these meetings, the children may contribute money for some benevolent object.

ARTICLE VI.

The officers of the Association shall be a President, Vice President, and Secretary, to be chosen annually.

ARTICLE VII.

At the annual meeting, the Secretary shall present a Report of the proceedings and condition of the Association.

ARTICLE VIII.

At each meeting, a Committee of two shall be appointed, to whom shall be assigned some subject upon which they shall be prepared at the next meeting to communicate their own thoughts, the opinions of approved authors, or other persons of experience in the work of education.

ARTICLE IX.

There shall be in connection with this Association a Library, composed of such works as may be best adapted to assist mothers in the physical, moral and religious training of their children. A Librarian shall be chosen annually, whose duty it shall be to take charge of the Library, receive contributions in books or money, (which shall be voluntary,) and report the same; and who shall, with the President and Vice President, make rules for the regulation of the Library, approve donations in books, and appropriate money in the purchase of others.



